

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An apparatus for collecting samples of interest from a card, the apparatus comprising a housing formed with a slot dimensioned for slidably receiving the card, at least one wiper disposed in the housing substantially adjacent the slot for biased engagement against the card slid through the slot and an enclosure for selectively enclosing the wiper.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the slot is configured to define a direction of movement for sliding the card through the slot, the wiper having a wiping blade with a longitudinal direction aligned substantially orthogonal to the direction of movement.

3. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the at least one wiper comprises two wipers substantially juxtaposed to one another, each said wiper having a blade for contact with the card, the blades being resiliently deflectable away from one another in response to forces exerted by the card.

4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the wiper is formed from an electrically conductive material.

5. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the electrically conductive material is a metallic foil having a thickness of between about 0.002-0.004 inch.

6. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the wiper has a blade for contacting the card and a plurality of spring arms extending from the blade, the spring arms of the wiper being spaced sufficiently from one another for reducing thermal mass of the wiper and facilitating deflection.

7. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising connections for applying an electric current to the wiper for selectively heating the wiper.

8. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a sensor for sensing movement of the card through the slot.

9. An apparatus for collecting samples from surfaces of a card, the apparatus comprising first and second wipers formed from an electrically conductive material, each said wiper having a blade with a wiping area, the wiping areas being disposed for contacting opposite surfaces of the card upon insertion of the card between the wipers, an enclosure for selectively enclosing said wipers, and a heater for heating the wipers sufficiently for vaporizing samples of material collected on said wiping edges.

10. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the blades of the wipers are oriented to define an acute angle to a card disposed between the wipers.

11. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the wiping areas of the wipers are preloaded against one another.

12. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the enclosure for enclosing said wipers includes first and second shells, at least one of said shells being movable toward and away from the other of the shells for selectively enclosing the wipers, the apparatus further comprising a detector communicating with said enclosure and operative for detecting substances of interest collected on said wipers from said card.

13. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the detector is an ion trap mobility spectrometer.

14. An apparatus for testing for substances of interest on surfaces of a card, said apparatus comprising;

a housing having a slot formed therein for slidably receiving said card;

first and second metallic wipers disposed in said apparatus and in proximity to said slot, said first and second metallic wipers being formed respectively with first and second resiliently deflectable wiper blades biased toward one another, said blades having wiping areas disposed relative to one another for contacting opposite surfaces of said card upon moving said card through said slot;

an enclosure selectively movable from an open position where said wipers are exposed for access at said slot and a closed position where said wipers are substantially enclosed;

an electric heater for heating said wipers when said enclosure is in said closed position; and

a detector communicating with said enclosure for testing for substances of interest collected on said blades of said wipers.

15. The apparatus of claim 14, further comprising a sensor for sensing passage of said card through said slot, said sensor generating a signal for closing said enclosure when said sensor means senses the passage of said card.

16. The apparatus of claim 14, wherein each said wiper has a plurality of spring arms extending from the blade of the respective wiper, said spring arms being spaced apart for reducing thermal mass and increasing flexibility.

17. The apparatus of claim 14, wherein the wipers are formed from a stainless steel having a thickness of between approximately 0.002-0.004 inch.

18. A method for testing for substances of interest, said method comprising:

receiving a card from a suspect;

passing the card against a resiliently deflectable metallic wiper such that said wiper removes substances from said card;

enclosing the wiper in an enclosure;

heating the wiper in the enclosure sufficiently for desorbing substances removed from said card and onto said wiper;

placing said wiper in communication with a detector; and

testing the collected sample for the presence of a substance of interest.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the step of heating comprises heating the wiper to a temperature of approximately 240°C.

20. The method of claim 18, further comprising the step of opening the enclosure after the testing step.